

Joint Statement of the Labor Subcommittee of the United States – Jordan Free Trade Agreement

Amman, Jordan
June 26, 2014

The Labor Subcommittee of the United States – Jordan Free Trade Agreement (FTA) convened its second meeting on June 25-26, 2014, in Amman, Jordan. Article 6.5 of the FTA recognizes that cooperation between Jordan and the U.S. provides enhanced opportunities to improve labor standards, and the Subcommittee is a formal mechanism for our two countries to work together to better understand each country's labor situation, cooperate on labor issues, and facilitate interaction with the public on labor matters. The Subcommittee comprises senior officials from the labor and trade ministries and other appropriate ministries. Officials from the U.S. Department of Labor, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the U.S. Department of State, and the Jordanian Ministries of Labor, Industry and Trade, and Health participated in this Subcommittee meeting.

The Subcommittee last met in Amman, Jordan, in September 2009, though our governments have since continued to communicate on labor issues. In January 2013, the U.S. and Jordanian Governments signed an Implementation Plan to address anti-union discrimination against foreign workers, conditions of their accommodations, and sexual harassment of and gender discrimination against such workers in the workplace. The U.S. Department of Labor signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Jordan in December 2013 to develop a Labor Cooperation mechanism that establishes priorities for cooperative activities on labor matters. The Labor Subcommittee just concluded serves to further the objectives of the Implementation Plan and Memorandum of Understanding, in addition to the FTA labor provisions.

During the meeting, the Subcommittee reaffirmed the Parties' labor commitments under the FTA and further clarified the domestic mechanisms, institutions, and procedures that each Party has established to advance the implementation of the FTA's labor provisions. The Subcommittee also held in-depth discussions on several topics, including: (1) activities to strengthen institutional capacity and labor law enforcement and compliance; (2) child labor and the protection of vulnerable populations; and (3) areas of common interest, such as protections against gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace, occupational safety and health, and the promotion of tripartite social dialogue. The Parties remain committed to engaging on a regular and continuing basis to vigorously advance labor rights and the FTA's labor provisions.

At the conclusion of the Subcommittee meeting the morning of June 26, the Parties convened a public session with workers, employers, civil society organizations, and the general public to discuss matters relating to the implementation of the Labor Chapter. As part of the public session, members of both governments and of the garment industry held a roundtable discussion with the public on the challenges and opportunities to promote labor rights in the garment sector. The Parties believe that the public session just concluded helps foster greater

transparency in the administration of the FTA's labor provisions and furthers the successful implementation of those labor provisions.